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"AFTER YOU!"

DIALOGICAL ETHICS AND THE PASTORAL COUNSELLING PROCESS

EDITED BY

A. LIÉGEOIS – R. BURGGRAEVE – M. RIEMSLAGH – J. CORVELEYN

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INTRODUCTION

"AFTER YOU" AND THE ASYMMETRIC RECIPROCITY OF PASTORAL COUNSELLING

The subject of this book is pastoral counselling as a particular form of pastoral care in the Christian context.

Formally speaking, pastoral counselling is a conversation whereby a pastor, in the framework of his pastoral task, engages in verbal contact with a conversation partner, likewise called the client or counsellee. With this, however, its most specific, qualifying aspect has not yet been named. After all, pastoral conversation is about a conversation that is 'pastoral' in nature. This means that it offers the client the space and possibility to bring up existential questions and experiences with regard to meaning and/or the Christian (religious) faith in discussion with a pastor who, from a Christian perspective, listens and speaks. Its goal is that in this conversation the client receives acknowledgement and support or advice, both on the level of insight as well as on the level of conviction, experience and practice. We can also call this the 'subject' or the 'content' of pastoral counselling.

In this book, we examine the actions of the persons involved in pastoral counselling, namely the event of the conversation itself or that which we call the 'counselling process'. Our attention is thereby directed not primarily at the technique or manner but at the ethical dimension, particularly at the ethical foundation and orientation of the pastoral conversation as a precondition for an authentic and fruitful conversation. Hence we can describe the theme of this book synthetically as 'the ethics of the pastoral counselling process'.

I. Encounter, Dialogue and Ethics: An Interdisciplinary Approach

In order to target this theme as adequately as possible, we need a view on conversation itself and its ethical dynamics. For this reason, attention is paid in the first part to the conversation event, "the discourse that persons facing each other hold between them, summoning one another

and exchanging statements and objections, questions and answers"[1]. There the emphasis lies not primarily on the content but on the conversation as an 'event of encounter'. At the same time, it is obvious that the exploration and deepening of the conversation as an 'event of encounter' relies on the well-known 'philosophy of dialogue'[2], that deals not only with conversation but likewise describes being-human itself as relational, meaning to say as 'standing-in-relationship' ('in-Beziehung-stehen') (Martin Buber), namely as a dialogical condition that precedes the factual dialogue: "the intersubjective nexus, deeper than the language. Gabriel Marcel speaks of an 'originative communication', from which the verbal communication is coming forth"[3].

This basis for the phenomenology of conversation as encounter brings us directly to the ethical dynamics that is essentially interwoven with it. We thus gain access to that which makes conversation an authentic encounter. At this, ethics is interpreted not in the classic sense of the word as an entirety of values and norms that are applied via universal reason to actions: "ethics as subordinated either to prudence, or to universalization of the maxim of action [Kant], or to the contemplation of a hierarchy of values communicated like a Platonic world of ideas"[4]. In contrast to that,

1. E. LEVINAS, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 137.

2. *Ibid.*: "The value that an entire series of philosophers, theologians and moralists, politicians, and even public opinion, attach to the notion, or to the practice – and, in any case, to the word – of dialogue, (...) attests to a new orientation toward the idea that Western society has had of the essence of the meaningful and the spiritual. This is perhaps a result of the trials of the twentieth century since the First World War. It is thus not out of the question, in our time, to speak of a philosophy of dialogue (...). The work of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig in Germany, that of Gabriel Marcel in France, and their influence in the world – but also the many remarkable works signed by less illustrious names – justify this manner of speaking". Cf. also ID., "Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Philosophy", in ID., *Outside the Subject*, London, The Athlone Press, 1993, p. 20: "*I and Thou*, published in 1923, revealed the existence in Germany of a whole current of thought that, whether anticipatory or reminiscent, more or less converged with Buber's ideas. Texts conceived along the same lines preceded or followed the publication of his book by a short interval. They were signed by Ferdinand Ebner, Hans and Rudolf Ehrenberg, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, Eberhard Griesbach and a few others. These authors, however, belonged to the same cultural sphere. The encounter between the work of Martin Buber and that of Gabriel Marcel is a more conclusive indication of a spiritual reality independent of the accidents of discourse. When Gabriel Marcel was writing his *Metaphysical Journal*, he did not know Martin Buber. He came from the intellectual tradition far removed, at that time, from the German academic atmosphere". For further information regarding the philosophy of dialogue, see in this book the contribution of Burggraeve, part I: In Line with Dialogical Thought.

3. E. LEVINAS., *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, The Hague – Boston, MA – London, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981, p. 27.

4. ID., *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (n. 1), pp. 149-150.

ethics is understood as a dimension of the intersubjective encounter itself, not as something external that is added to it but as something internal that is entirely woven into it. In this regard, we are actually talking of "an ethics [as foundation] before ethics [as application]". Hence the ethical 'essence' of the encounter should not in any way be conceived of as static, like a pre-given and permanent substance. On the contrary, it realises itself as an interactive event that develops as direction and conversation – as speaking and listening and responding, or as 'contra-dicting' and answering differently – in an 'infinitely dynamic' manner.

The title of the first part reads: "Dialogue and ethics as preconditions for pastoral counselling". The manner in which phenomenology and ethics are introduced in the different contributions is indeed diverse. On the one hand, different thinkers serve as sources of inspiration like, among others, Emmanuel Levinas (1905-1995), Martin Buber (1878-1965), Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). On the other hand, the authors' personal views on the 'event of dialogue' are illustrated on the basis of different forms and fields of conversation that come from both the pastoral as well as the therapeutic setting or that are involved in moral formation and education. The different contributions of the first part will be reviewed one by one, with an eye to the plan and development of the author's own view on 'conversation' as 'discourse' and 'authentic encounter'.

In her contribution Sheila McNamee searches for the main lines of 'a relational ethic', where at the same time the conditions for dialogue can be defined (chapter I). For that purpose, she starts with Bakhtin, who claims that dialogue is a responsive activity. When we are responsive to others, our words and actions are not entirely our own, they carry our history of relationships and the beliefs and values these relationships have crafted. This responsivity of dialogue situates the professional practitioners of dialogue, in different forms of guidance and counselling, within a relational ethic where attentiveness to the process of relating is centered, rather than adherence to some abstract, decontextualized set of principles. Dialogue, as an ethic of relationally sensitive practice, respects the diversity of locally situated beliefs and values. Thus, dialogue allows practitioners to let go of imposing judgment, assessment and evaluation of others' actions and opens the door for attentiveness to the coordination of diverse social orders.

Among the various domains of dialogic study, there is for the most part a remarkable silence when it comes to listening. Whichever way it is glossed – as rhetoric, dialogue, language, or argumentation – the western conception of *the logos* emphasizes speech at the expense of listen-

ing. And the problem with conceiving language in terms of speech and speaking is not only that it obscures and minimizes the importance of listening, but also that it conceals the ways in which listening is the event, occurrence, and performance of the ethical relation. Without it, no ethical relation can exist. Drawing upon three central ideas – alterity, intersubjectivity, and responsibility – in Martin Buber's and Emmanuel Levinas's dialogic philosophy, Lisbeth Lipari builds the case in her essay for listening as the nascent origin of the ethical relation (chapter II). Moreover, as she will argue, listening is a form of conjuring wherein the (in)vocation of dialogic ethics is a process that listens others to speech.

In her contribution Marie-Cécile Bertau concentrates on the notion of voice as polyphonic, namely as voices of others for the self, *and* as voices of others in the self (chapter III). The notion of voice introduced is based on certain ideas about language and speaking/listening subjects derived from a specific notion of fundamental human alterity. Alterity is, in this understanding, a developmental as well as a relational movement, thus it is performed and vividly experienced. The form this takes is language as spoken and listened to by the other, so the voice uttered and listened to is of central importance. Voice is seen as a psychophysical phenomenon, manifesting individual as well as socio-cultural meanings and value accents, bound to an utterance and thus transcending the speaking body and leading to a multivoiced self. Alterity and performed language are inseparably related, which leads to the formulation of the basic position of the subject as addressed and affected. Dialogue is then the means of a development from and to the other and the self, a means through which the subjects distinguish and relate themselves and each other in terms of positions and voices. These basic notions can be grasped in ontogenetic development as well as in adulthood in the acquisition and performance of a multiplicity of voices and positions characteristic for social as well as individual language usages. This multiplicity is effective on the communicative as well as on the self-reflective and self-developmental level. Polyphony, as representation of a simultaneity of voices forming a perceivable 'Gestalt', corresponds to the pervasive multivoicedness of socialized individuals, its improvement can be said to be a means and resource for constructing and reconstructing social reality.

In his essay Peter Rober pleads for paying special attention to the client's 'no' in every kind of counselling and particularly in marital and family therapy (MFT) (chapter IV). Dialogue in MFT is by definition a multi-actor dialogue: marital therapy is a dialogue between the therapist with two partners of the same generation, and family therapy is a dialogue between at least two family members of at least two different

generations. This raises important challenges for therapists since this means that the conversation is often tension-filled and can have dramatic real life consequences for the family members. In the first part of the essay a conceptual frame is developed, relying on MFT literature on the subject as well as on the conceptual discussion in the field around the concept of not-knowing. The therapeutic effectiveness of the therapist's egalitarian intentions and the concept's implicit idealistic view of dialogue that heals naturally are questioned. The validity of some of Mikhail Bahktin concepts (addressivity, responsivity, ...) to address the specific complexities of the MFT encounter is especially highlighted. Then a case study is presented in which the reflection is limited to a micro-analysis of the first minutes of a first session of a marital therapy. The third part of the essay discusses what can be learned from the case-study against the background of some of the central concepts and ideas developed in the first part of the essay. This leads to the conclusion that the marital and family therapist cannot escape the uncomfortable position of being responsible for finding ways to contribute actively to a fruitful dialogue that is not a natural given at all, but rather a project not only in the technical but especially in the ethical sense of the word.

We round off the first part with two contributions that in their own way pay attention not only to a 'clinical, therapeutic counselling and guidance context' but also and especially to moral formation and education, and to the view on the human and on morality that are implied therein.

In the fifth chapter Vangie Bergum explores the relational space between persons (professional and client, teacher and student) as the place that quickens ethical action. Using experiential and theoretical knowledge, the ethical space is shown as a vibrant interactive environment, full of possibility for all participants within the space. Actions in ethical space are embodied, where respect for the personhood of each person is seen as the primary ethical principle. The embodied experience of quickening shows the moral moment of touching and being touched by others. Through recognizing the needs of both self and other, the ethical process of listening and talking together – dialogue – can continue. Ethical space, as a moral geography, is a place where participants grow and change by grappling with what is ethically fitting in each moment, encounter and challenge. Two examples, one from the end of life and one from the beginning, show that ethical action is a process, in which ethical decision-making must consider all forms of ethical knowledge – theory, principles, and personal experience (narrative, intuitive, emotive, and informal). The ethical space, found in both classroom and clinic, is enhanced by skills such as engagement, improvisation and

interdependence that contribute to professional ethical action. Exploration of the difference between 'curriculum as planned' versus 'curriculum as lived' demonstrates the necessity of using personal experience, theatre, drama and art, as well traditional ethical theory in education. Dialogue is inherent to the exploration of ethical spaces and relationships both in the educational setting as well as in clinical practice.

In her essay Darcia Narvaez reflects on the neurobiological development of morality and moral functioning (chapter VI). A discussion of moral development often begins with questions philosophers ask: Is morality innate (Emerson, Rousseau, Thoreau) or are humans innately evil (Augustine, Hobbes, Machiavelli)? Can morality be taught explicitly through reason (Plato), or is it a matter of learning from experience (Aristotle)? In order to answer these questions the author uses an interdisciplinary and empirical approach. It may be best to begin with Socrates' (or the Oracle of Delphi's) insight, *Know thyself.* What do we know about humans from empirical science? What has evolved in human nature, that is, what is genetically determined, and what is 'plastic', or developed from experience? Can experience influence human moral nature? In the essay the current state of knowledge about the evolution and ontogeny of morality is examined. The essay concludes with suggestions for how to cultivate compassionate or 'dialogical' morality, based on supportive relationships.

II. Pastoral Counselling as Ethical Process

After having provided in the first part a number of building blocks for an interdisciplinary, critical reflection on every form of counselling as a qualitative event of conversation, the second part of this book will focus on the pastoral conversation as 'event of conversation' whereby our 'dialogical human condition' takes shape in its own manner. In addition two seemingly contradictory characteristics are linked with each other, namely asymmetry and reciprocity.

In the footsteps of Levinas it has been suggested that pastoral counselling, indeed like every other guidance and counselling, is not only marked factually by various forms of asymmetry, for instance that of power (and all the inherent risks of abuse of power and imbalances of power), but it is in particular based on a radical form of ethical asymmetry as well. The uniqueness of the other – the 'counsellee' – deserves to have priority because pastoral conversation starts from the presence and the question or the distress of the other. It is this priority of the pastoral 'client' that

orientates the approach – the outreach – of the pastoral counsellor. It is the alterity of the other that leads the counsellor to give absolute priority to the other: 'after You'. In the words of Levinas we can state that pastoral conversation, as the face-to-face through the other-I-dialogue, "signifies the worth of the other person or, still more precisely, insofar as within the immediacy of the relation to the other person alone (and without the recourse to some general principle [to be applied]), a meaning such as 'be worth' (*valoir*) is sketched out. This is a worth attached to the human being coming out of the value of the other, or the human being who is other; a value attached to the other as other [*autrui*]"[5]. We can also call it the ethical 'urgency' that arises at the moment the pastoral counsellee and counsellor come into contact with each other – an ethical urgency that is expressed in the ethical 'politeness' of the 'after You' proceeding from the pastoral counsellor directed towards the pastoral counsellee: "Is not the very opening of the dialogue already a way for the *I* [*pastoral counsellor*] to uncover itself, to deliver itself, a way for the *I* to place itself at the disposition of the *You* [*pastoral counsellee*]?"[6].

This ethical asymmetry that not only characterises but also lies at the foundation of pastoral conversation does not contradict the reciprocity of the conversation itself. On the contrary, ethical asymmetry is the basis for reciprocity in the sense that by giving acknowledgement to the other the pastoral counsellee is not only enabled to tell his or her story, to express his or her distress or existential questions, but the counsellee also comes into contact in a real way with the pastoral counsellor as an other *and* throughout this contact – throughout this conversation – can find answers or inspiration or meaning in his or her own way. On the basis of this fundamental ethical asymmetry the pastoral counsellor and counsellee do not enter into a subject-object-relationship but on the contrary into a subject-subject-relationship whereby – thanks to the encounter and the conversation – a reciprocal involvement arises, but without eradicating or rather without allowing for the eradication of ethical asymmetry. Acknowledgement and reciprocity are only possible when the 'I' (the pastoral counsellor) relinquishes his "claim to know", in other words withdraws himself from his (professional) position of power in order to open up space for the other and to listen to the other's appeal. In that sense listening comes before speaking with the pastoral counsellee, the core of all invocation as interpellation. Or rather the face-to-face of the pastoral conversation is essentially interpellation as 'vocative': You (in

5. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
6. *Ibid.*

the second person), and not 'he/she' (in the third person). "The recognition of alterity does not consist in forming an idea of alterity. The adequate access to the alterity of the other is not a perception, but the saying of Thou. I speak *to* the other before speaking *of* the other. The immediate contact in and through this invocation is an original relation, or the 'relation by excellence' as it is called by Buber. Speaking to the other as You is thus tantamount to let her/his alterity be fulfilled"[7]. Or put differently: the ethical asymmetry of the 'other-I'-relationship is the condition of possibility for the reciprocity of a respectful conversation wherein the 'partners' – in their ethical but also factual asymmetry – give each other acknowledgement and thus are truly 'present' to each other.

That asymmetry and reciprocity (as a form of symmetry) do not exclude but rather include each other is articulated in the title of this *Introduction:* "Asymmetric reciprocity of pastoral counselling". Both are treated in a majority of contributions in the second part of this book in various modalities and levels. Inspiration is taken not only from the basic authors we already mentioned, Levinas and Buber, but also from other authors like Axel Honneth (°1949), Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (1920-2007), Pamela Cooper-White (°1955), Aat van Rhijn (1930-2002) and Hanneke Meulink-Korf (°1948) in particular in order to discuss thoroughly their own accents on acknowledgement and reciprocity in a context of ethical asymmetry.

In the first contribution of the second part, Marina Riemslagh, inspired by Levinas and Buber, searches for an ethically qualitative and effective pastoral counselling (chapter VII). What is the correct 'interaction' between pastoral counsellor and counselling partner in professional pastoral dialogue? What does a pastor owe a counselling partner in the context of a pastoral relationship? In her essay the author aims to find out what is correct in pastoral counselling and what is 'against doing justice' to the counselling partner. For Levinas doing justice has to do with giving priority to the counselling partner and to suffer with the suffering of the other. For Buber it means that the pastor and the counselling partner build up an authentic person-to-person relationship. This chapter discusses and compares the philosophy of Levinas and Buber for use in founding and orienting pastoral counselling. In Levinasian literature Levinas and Buber are usually pitted against each other and Buber is often criticised from the standpoint of Levinas. In this essay another path is taken: Levinas' ethical view on conversation – and thus on pastoral conversation as 'asymmetric revelation' – is connected with Buber's

7. E. LEVINAS, *Proper Names*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1996, p. 22.

concept of reciprocity: 'asymmetric and reciprocal revelation'. Furthermore, Buber not only describes the singularity and originality of the encounter (Ich-Du-Beziehung – I-Thou-relationship) but likewise investigates that which makes this interpersonal treatment into an 'authentic' encounter, and thus into what promotes or hinders the other-I-encounter. Valuable insights for a qualitative – humane and humanising – pastoral relationship are contained therein.

In her contribution Carrie Doehring intends to outline how the relational ethics of Levinas informs the intercultural approach to pastoral care (chapter VIII). She describes this intercultural approach as a three-part process. First, pastoral counsellors must be able to use a comparative approach to religion that highlights what is different about each person's religious faith – the 'strangeness of the other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and possessions', such that 'the absolutely foreign [aspects of those seeking care] can instruct us'. Second, pastoral counsellors must cultivate a critical self-awareness of who they are spiritually and theologically, so that they do not unwittingly impose their religious meaning making and practices on those seeking care. Such self-reflexivity and other-awareness will de-center pastoral counsellors and reveal the careseeker as stranger and 'other' in the *infini* (infinity), such that 'the epiphany of the face as face opens up humanity'. When this remarkable relational space opens up, the third and culminating moment of intercultural care is possible. This is when pastoral counsellors and care seekers co-create contextual provisional meanings and ways of experiencing holiness.

In the contribution of Annelies van Heijst attention is given to acknowledgement as an important form of 'asymmetric reciprocity' (chapter IX). The main argument in her essay is that pastoral counselling is pointless, unless the 'client' draws from it a feeling of being recognized, i.e. feels valued as someone who is entitled to receive support and as a person who really matters to others. The concept of recognition (expressed as love, respect and social appreciation) as it was coined by Axel Honneth and complemented by his critics, offers a novel view of the way humans are interdependent – not only on a material level but also with regard to the place they occupy in the community and to their sense of being loved, respected and appreciated. When searching for an ethics to ground pastoral care and counselling, the dynamics of recognition can be an asset, since it goes beyond the dichotomy of the powerful professional who helps as opposed to the client who occupies the role of a mere receiver. This is especially relevant to the present condition of the health care and welfare sector, in which much pastoral care and counselling is given.

Pastors are now pressed to give account of their work in terms of product output, effectiveness and efficiency and need another frame of reference to express what their work is actually all about.

In his essay Axel Liégeois aims to make a critical ethical reflection on asymmetry and power in pastoral counselling (chapter X). The research question is how pastors can deal in an ethical and responsible way with the asymmetric relationship and the power imbalance in pastoral counselling. His reflection is based on a study of literature and on experiences in the field of pastoral counselling. First the asymmetric positions and the subsequent imbalances of power in the pastoral relationship are described. This power imbalance is structural and premoral, and becomes morally qualified depending on the way the pastor and the conversation partner deal with it. Because the pastor has the greatest power, he or she bears the greatest responsibility, namely not to abuse the power but to empower the conversation partner. Then one possible response to this challenge is presented, namely the development of a coherent pattern of ethical attitudes for the pastor. Attitudes are the driving force of human acts, the pastor's motivation and inspiration in pastoral counselling. The author discerns three sets of three attitudes: openness, attentiveness and mildness; recognition, responsibilization and truthfulness; wisdom, self-reflection and integrity. The pastor's ethical attitudes are a good way to prevent the abuse of power and to enhance empowerment in pastoral counselling.

For Annemie Dillen it is important to search for a 'just counselling relationship' or a just relationship of pastoral care (chapter XI). Therefore she focuses on how the contextual thought of the American-Hungarian family therapist Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy can contribute to this subject and how it is related to other theories about pastoral counselling, such as the work of Pamela Cooper-White and reflections on 'power'. The essay concretely shows how various concepts, elaborated by Nagy, shed new light on dynamics within pastoral dialogue. Contextual pastoral care, as developed in the Netherlands by Aat van Rhijn and Hanneke Meulink-Korf, aims at stimulating the development of people, among other things, by motivating them to work on more justice in their primary (family) relations. The essay discusses among others the concept of 'direct address' in light of theories about 'transference' and 'countertransference' and within a broader framework of power dynamics in pastoral relationships. 'Direct address' is the 'cornerstone' of real dialogue and worth striving for in order to come to justice in relationships, not only in primary but also in so-called 'secundary' relationships like different forms of counselling and supervision. In order to come to a form of

pastoral counselling that does justice to everyone involved in the counselling process it is important to strive for 'connection', but to notice at the same time one's own subjectivity. Multidirected partiality is one of the attitudes that can help a pastoral counsellor to reach this goal within the counselling process itself and to stimulate it in the life of all those involved or affected by the pastoral counselling.

In his contribution Roger Burggraeve sheds light again on pastoral conversation as an ethical event from the perspective of Emmanuel Levinas' vision on the face and responsibility (chapter XII). The essay can be seen as an inclusion to that of Marina Riemslagh. The following foundational aspects of pastoral conversation are discussed: the otherness and the mastership of the client; and the ethical dynamics of the pastoral face-to-face, beginning with the vulnerability of the other and the temptation to violence in the pastor. This violence has many faces: diagnostic reduction, rhetoric, dominance and tyranny or even terror. This means that the pastoral responsibility for the client starts with the prohibition 'thou shall not kill' and the negative movement of restraint, namely the decision not to inflict pressure, direct or indirect violence on the client. This self-emptying 'withdrawal' opens the perspective for positive forms of responsibility, starting from a simple 'good morning', a first form of ethical courtesy, through acknowledgement and respect, attention and listening, goodness full of longing, not letting the client alone in his or her suffering and dying (true consolation), to the responsibility for the responsibility of the client, not only for him or herself but also for others.

In the final essay (epilogue) Kenneth and Mary Gergen offer a critical retrospective, paying attention to the so-called 'missing voices' in the relational ethics elaborated throughout the different essays in the book (chapter XIII). In a 'fully relational ethic', that is at the same time realistic, we should not fall into the trap of a 'romanticised' conceptualisation of the other by means of emphasising only his or her phenomenological and ethical alterity and pay no attention to the factual other. However radically different the other may be in essence, and whatever amount of respect he or she may deserve, we cannot simply sweep under the rug that the other – the [pastoral] client – can maintain a value system or life pattern that is distasteful, unethical or evil. It surely cannot be that we lend an empathic and confirming ear to a tyrannical and abusive or bully client, a sexist and racist counsellee, a pedophile, a fundamentalist and/or 'terrorizing' faithful. It is indeed unacceptable that we approach only with acknowledgement and empathy and not with a sharp critical sense at the same time those counsellees who engage in behavior that they may consider to be perfectly acceptable or justifiable to themselves, but not

at all for the counsellor nor to others (group, community, society). Care-givers and (pastoral) counsellors cannot remain silent, curious, accepting, and hoping only to make a contribution to the client's good in his or her own terms. If the pastoral or therapeutic relationship is truly a dialogue, then the care-givers may expect the client to grant to them the right to voice. Their 'face' should not be obliterated in the inter-change! Therefore in the essay two types of moral action are delineated, namely first and second order morality. 'First order morality' is concerned with the ethical order within a particular subgroup. Social conflict results from the conflict among first order moral systems. 'Second order morality' concerns itself with conflicts between competing moral visions, and with generating relational processes that keep alive the possibility for making mutual morality. Applied to care-giving and (pastoral) counselling, it is important that all parties recognize the relational processes that are necessary in order for ethical action to take place, and to honor the kinds of second order moral processes that bring otherwise alien moralities together. Several micro-practices that promote such outcomes in the care-giving and counselling relationship are discussed.

III. A Relationship without Tyranny, in Two Directions

This critical and retrospective contribution brings us to the end of this *Introduction* with a plea for an "order without tyranny"[8], namely a 'non-tyrannical' (pastoral) counselling in two directions. The ethical acknowledgement of the one (the counsellor) for the other (the counsellee) consists in questioning and avoiding all abuse of power and tyranny towards the other. In this sense the 'after You' expresses the exigency to approach the other non-violently. The non-tyrannical relationship, however, cannot come from one side only, namely only from the side of the pastoral counsellor. It must likewise come from the counsellee. The client as other is vulnerable, indeed, simply by means of the fact that he or she appeals to a care-giver or a counsellor. But the client can also abuse this vulnerability and even use it as a weapon of power not only to influence the counsellor (which can still be positive) but also to force the counsellor to take certain pronouncements, agreements or actions by means of some form of manipulation, humiliation, if not subtle terror. Hence, pastoral

8. E. Levinas, *Freedom and Command*, in Id., *Collected Philosophical Papers*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, Dordrecht – Boston, MA – Lancaster, Nijhoff Publishers – Kluwer Academic Publishers Group, 1987, 15-23, p. 23.

counselling must be reciprocal on the ethical level: from both sides – not only from the counsellor but also from the counsellee – it must be non-tyrannical and non-violent. In that, both pastoral counsellor and counsellee are radically equal and their relationship and conversation must therefore be based on mutual respect: "I recognize the other [the counsellee]; that is, I believe in her/him. But if this recognition were a submission to the other, the submission would take all its worth away from my recognition; recognition by submission would annul my dignity, through which recognition has validity. (...) The term respect could be taken up here, provided that it be emphasized that the reciprocity of this respect is not an indifferent relation, and that it is not the outcome of, but the condition for ethics. (...) To show respect cannot mean to subject oneself. (...) The one respected is not the one to whom, but the one with whom one renders justice. Respect is a relationship between equals. And justice presupposes this original equality. (...) All the slackness of the world filters in through friendly faces as soon as the relationship of mutual responsibility is suspended"[9]. Only in and through this ethical reciprocity does the 'after You' of the title of this book acquire its full and correct significance, coming from me towards the other *and* proceeding from the other towards me.

We hope and wish that this book may find its way to both therapists and all psycho-social care-givers as well as to pastoral and spiritual counsellors.

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9. Id., "The Ego and the Totality", in Id., *Collected Philosophical Papers* (n. 8), pp. 43-44.

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